

Syria and Libya in 1971 — but these have achieved little. Libya has always been afraid of being swallowed up by its comparatively gigantic neighbour, but possibly Qaddafi's ardour and Egypt's experience can find the right formula for success. Whatever happens to this proposed union, it is safe to say that Egypt is deeply and irrevocably committed to the Arab cause, and that Egypt and its neighbours will pursue the ideal of Arab unity.

As to Egypt's form of government in the future, there is little likelihood of a return to parliamentary democracy. In Egypt this system, imported from the West, was exploited by the privileged few for their own ends. It has, in fact, been successfully applied in few of the developing nations. Probably, as Arnold Toynbee has said, parliamentary democracy is a luxury of the affluent society. The emphasis of Egypt's present regime has been upon "social democracy" under a paternalistic, authoritarian government, the form most often adopted by countries in a hurry to modernize and industrialize.

Egypt, then, while remembering its Pharaonic heritage, will continue to choose a path in keeping with its Arab-Islamic past. Internally, Egypt will urgently pur-

sue the goal of industrial development and a modified state socialism under the direction of a highly-centralized, bureaucratic regime. In the international sphere, Egypt will pursue a policy of non-alignment as far as it is allowed to in a world of power blocs.

Since there is little likelihood of obtaining redress for the sufferings of the Palestinian Arabs or of recovering Sinai in the near future, the struggle with Israel will go on. Egypt's leaders cannot negotiate with Israel on the basis of the surrender of Arab territory and Arab rights and hope to stay in power. Although Egypt cannot embark upon an all-out war with Israel with any prospect of winning, the situation is volatile and could explode unexpectedly. Another possibility is that Egyptian frustration at the state of "no war, no peace" might prompt them to a renewal of commando attacks across the Suez Canal into Sinai. However, the demand for some sort of action may have been satisfied for the time being by the expulsion of the Russian military "advisers". The confrontation may therefore be postponed and deflected into other channels — economic, political and diplomatic.

Soviet role in the Middle East

. . . In contrast to Europe, where the Soviet leaders have chosen a policy of stabilization and *détente*, the Middle East has presented a shifting political scene in which the U.S.S.R. is engaged in an active political and military competition with the United States which both sides frankly admit is dangerous to world peace.

In contrast to South Asia, where the Soviet leaders, although virtually compelled to support North Vietnam and oppose the United States for reasons of solidarity with a Communist state and of competition with China, have limited their involvement, the Middle East has witnessed such a heavy concentration of Soviet effort and such deep Soviet involvement as to suggest that the leaders in Moscow see vital interests at stake. In contrast to . . . South Asia, where they chose to back India — the stronger party — and made notable gains at small risk, in the Middle East they have sided with Arab states of proven weakness and instability.

The inevitable question is: Why? . . . What has the Soviet Union gained in military positions, political influence and general prestige? How solid is the founda-

tion on which these gains rest?

The recent action of Egypt in requesting the withdrawal of most of the Soviet military advisers and experts appears to have posed that last question in stark form.

This dramatic move and the circumstances surrounding it are not yet sufficiently clear to enable us to reach firm conclusions . . . As an expression of nationalism, it can hardly be overestimated. Some call it a historic turning point, a basic shift in the balance of power, indicating that the Soviet position in the Middle East has passed its apogee and can only decline henceforward. Others pass it off as a temporary setback, or even as a sly game of collusion. Probably neither interpretation is correct . . .

. . . Egypt has been and remains the centrepiece of the Soviet position in the Middle East. The country's size, geographic location and influence on other Arab states were as apparent to Moscow as to Western capitals. . . . (Excerpts from *study of Soviet role in Middle East* by John C. Campbell, Senior Research Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (New York Problems of Communism September-October, 1972).